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Indian Lore of the Bay of Quinte

— BY —

*Wallace Havelock Robb,
Abbey Dawn*

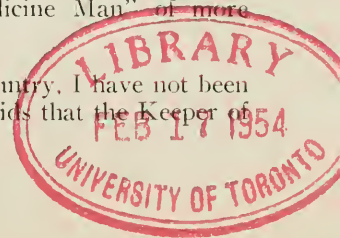
This address will not concern itself with the strange relics at Abbey Dawn, those archaeological enigmas made and left by people in the Bay of Quinte area in the unknown and baffling past. We shall deal with the red man, the North American Indian, as far as we at present know him, from about one thousand (1000 A.D.) to the early part of the nineteenth century.

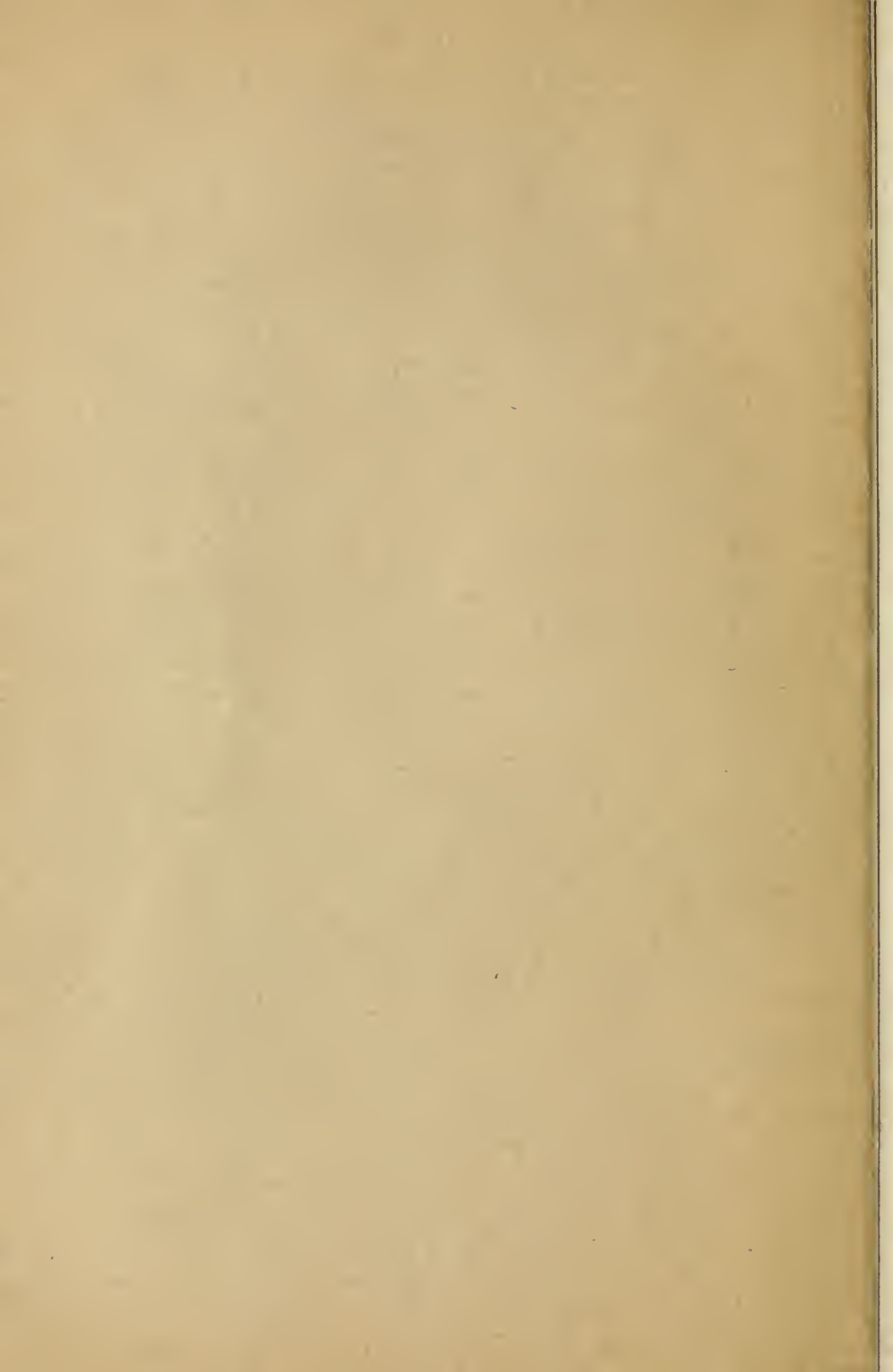
From the very hour the white man arrived in the Western Hemisphere, everything about the red man's way-of-life, which was an ideal form of civilization, everything the red man thought and did, was altered, corrupted, or destroyed, except his native tradition which was protected by the infallibility of the poet, "The Keeper of the Wampum", and the technical perfection of his ceremonial recital, or reading of the wampum, at the Council Fire. The Council Fire was more than parliament. It was the court, the hearth, the comforter, the town hall and the all-in-all of the people, and it was never without dignity.

The reading of the wampum, the recital of the laws, traditions and religion, before the people, by their poet, was kept pure and aloof from passing influence, or even steady political pressure, by four powerful and well-nigh unchangeable things: wampum strings, or belts; the inherent and fiercely incorruptible pride of the poet in himself and his priestly office; the "Prompters", a body of two score, or more, appointed individuals charged with the responsibility of creating an uproar if there were any innovations or deviations in recital, or unauthorized additions; and finally the geography, all place names being romantic and beautiful aids to memory. This was especially so of the Huron-Iroquois peoples; its summit of perfection was the Flint People, the Mohawks.

This was a civilization perfectly suited to the people, time and place. It had the humanity and philosophy of Jesus, and the wisdom of the Greeks. It was a "Plato's Dream", the perfect democracy. It was on the point of discovering, yea, had discovered, music as the offspring of its poetry, just as the Greeks had done in their day, when the "enlightened" (and may Manitou forgive me the use of the word!) white man came as the Russians come today, "in peace, to save and set free these poor, unfortunate people!" The gap between the lofty calling of the "Keeper of the Wampum" of the Mohawks and the "Medicine Man" of more primitive tribes was, often, a vast void.

In dealing with the Indian lore of the Kente Country, I have not been and am not infallible; yet, I have all three powerful aids that the Keeper of





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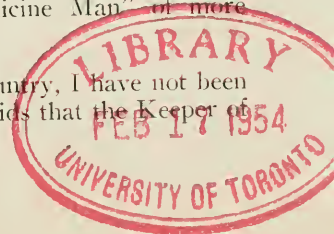
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the Wampum had (only a little less perfect than his, maybe) and I still have two: my own pride of high office, and the geography of the Kente, what is left of it, that is! I mourn the loss of Kajeje Yohsta, my Mohawk mentor, herself one of the "Prompters", a Royal Turtle descended from King Hendrick, herself a proud poet in Mohawk, who wept with frustration because her own very beautiful translation into English of her native poetry was inadequate. It was the Council Fire of the Kente that adopted me; it was the Council Fire that named me Great White Eagle, and gave her authority to make me a Pine Tree Chief. But it was she who spoke the words and placed the symbol of holy office upon my head before the people in sacred Council Fire ceremony. Let this mention of it serve to dramatize for you the power of the "Mothers of the Tribes", the women senators, among the Iroquois. They named for chiefhood those entitled by blood line, which was through the mother; those of merit and likely to benefit the nation; and they openly rebuked and had put down, promptly, any unworthy chief. I had the good fortune, once, to witness a serious rebuke that a "pint size" Mother of the Tribes administered to a "king size" blusterer before the people. It was in Mohawk, but it was obvious that she was laying the law on the line. And he took it, humbly and in silence.

— II —

It would be logical to set the stage with red man geography (what is left of it, as I said!) but I shall advance with emotional fire and speak first of the immortality of a great man of vision secretly cherished in the hearts of a bewildered people for over five hundred years. I refer to the prophet, Deganaweda—

A light in eclipse
That refuses to die!

Deg-ah-nah-zwe-dah is Mohawk and means "A stream having two sources". The origin of the word is unknown, but a fair guess would be that it lies in the fact that he is said to have been born a Huron and was adopted by the Mohawks. His name seems to be a good way of expressing the phrase, Huron-Iroquois.

We cannot treat of Deganaweda adequately and fittingly in this address because all the time available would not be sufficient. And, yet, it would make no more sense to mention the red man's history without him than one would cover the history of the United States of America without mention of Lincoln. Therefore, let us honour ourselves by honouring the greatest North American life, thing, or event, albeit but briefly.

Mention of Lincoln gives me a way to express the greatness of Deganaweda, as I comprehend it and as I believe posterity is bound to see it. Deganaweda was a far, far greater man than Lincoln. He was the greatest

statesman ever to walk this North American Continent. The Greeks had their gods; and if America ever has any, Deganaweda will be the greatest among the great. He was a match for Archimedes and Plato. He made a white, stone canoe which floated before the people; he organized a united and powerful League for Peace, which established peace for over two hundred years and until the white man destroyed it; he established democracy in a pure form, a form of government of which the present United States government is but a bastard form, an anaemic imitation. I have been able to discover little or no difference in the philosophies of Jesus and Deganaweda. The United Nations today is but a weak and ineffective imitation of Deganaweda's League for Peace, the Five Nations, later the Six. It was Deganaweda who planted the symbolic Tree of Peace. After his death, as he had declined chiefhood, a memorial chieftainship was established, that of Pine Tree Chief, a holy office to be bestowed only upon a rare one, now and again, one whose gifts and service seemed to merit it. The name of Deganaweda was so holy, after his death, that it never was mentioned casually, nor other than in Council Fire, and, even then, reference to him was, usually, indirect. "He whom Hiawatha assisted". It was this sacred silence, it seems, that threw Longfellow off the trail and caused him to credit Hiawatha with the formation of the League of Peace, the League of the Iroquois. But mistakes or no mistakes, had the Indians only known of the mellowing potency of Longfellow's epic, its leavening beauty, its softening effect on the white man, surely they would have made Longfellow a Pine Tree Chief.

Contemplation of the life of Deganaweda can give one a whole panorama of American history with the red man horizon in the background: Deganaweda's prophesy, with the vision of a poet, to the effect that the red man would be conquered by the white man, would go into a long and bitter eclipse, ultimately to emerge as the real victor, has proven true beyond any question, and the proofs are at every hand, not only in America, but extending over the world. This address does not permit of adequate recognition of the debt we owe the red man for our way of life.

Deganaweda was born on the north shore of the Kente, just west of the present Deseronto, in what is now called the Tyendingaga Mohawk Reserve. He is said to have been of Huron stock; possibly his being a Huron, or the obscurity on the point, helped to make him acceptable to the different nations he was seeking to unite. He was born around 1400 A.D. And this may be the place to say something on the side: the failure of the Sulpicians on the Kente, in 1668, was inevitable, as I see it. They established their mission not only in the very innermost sanctum of the Thunderbird, the Cathedral Country of the Mohawks. They planted themselves on the holiest spot of all, the birthplace of Deganaweda! Only the inherent patience and tolerance of the Mohawks can account for the survival of the priests. It would have been a similar gesture on the part of the Indians, if they had sent a few sub-chiefs to Rome to call the

Pope an imposter, the Cross of Christ an insulting, political symbol, and had called upon all Christians to turn Mohawk.

When Benjamin Franklin was pleading with the Assembly to unite and form the United States, he said words to the effect, that surely the white man was no less in ability in these matters than the red man who has set them such a good example of democracy in operation. We will leave Deganaweda, then, with this thought, that out of the Kente, this beautiful Bay of Quinte with its fabulously rich lore which we are considering, arose this great and peaceful leader, the peerless persuader, "He Whom Hiawatha Assisted", and whose peace of more than two hundred years we terminated in blood, in the name of Jesus!

— III —

One of the things contributing to North American Indian tradition's immunity to changeful influence was, as I have said, geographical names. The melody of these names, their romantic meanings, was no accident. As one of the by products of my own research for the book, *Thunderbird*, we have the story of Champlain's sojourn in and around Cataraqui greatly enriched: the Mohawk names of Wolfe and Howe Islands, Ga-no-kwes-no and Ga-wen-es-ko, respectively, meaning "The Safe Passage". We have lost the name for Gates Island, now renamed Treasure Island, but I rather think that the Indian name probably meant "at the edge of the marsh", or some such helpful contribution to the overall name, Safe Passage. These names are a song not unlike the brief, gemlike poems of China, a trail to the origin of the red man that the ethnologist seems to have neglected. And here is how this Indian poetry served Champlain. Ga-no-kwes-no (Wolfe Island) means, literally, "I can see the bottom from my canoe" And so you can, all along the southern shore from the top down to sheltered water. Now, then, if you look at the upper end of Howe Island, you will see that it has a long point which extends away out toward Gates, or Treasure Island at the front of Abbey Dawn. This point disappears in a shoal. Howe Island's name, Ga-wen-es-ko, means, literally, "the sound of the waves beating on the shore," variously interpreted as "a sounding shore or shoal", which indicated to the red man that there are shoals and shallows. Boiled down, the little poem meant "Safe Passage". Champlain, being a thoroughly practical man, was too stupid and unaware to see anything beyond the end of his nose; but that he did get the "Safe Passage" idea is more than probable. It was the last week in October (or nearly so) in 1615, when his dejected and defeated war party returned from their unprovoked and far reaching attack on the Onondagas. On their down trip, in summer, it is likely they had crossed Lake Ontario water from Prince Edward County, which was possible in calm weather. It wasn't too big a chance; but in late October? No! Champlain was badly wounded. The Indians would take him their way, whether he liked it or not, something proven immediately

THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT THIS WAS
THE ANCIENT EASTERN END OF THE KENTE!

thereafter by their refusal to proceed to Huronia without him, on the one hand, and until he recovered, on the other. The late Lawrence Burpee worked this all out and made his map of Champlain's return accordingly. Burpee did it chiefly on straight logic. He shows Champlain's trail as running from the Abbey Dawn marsh overland to a marsh up the Catarauqui above Kingston Mills, the safe and short way to get to Huronia, or a campsite around where Kingston now is.

Gananoque and the Thousand Islands do not concern our title; at least, they would not concern it, if we were to behave like "all right thinking people." But we are poets and rebels! Gah-nah-naw-kwe and Gah-tah-raw-kwe are another little poem, or song, the melody of which helped the Indian's memory; Ga-ta-ra-kwe (Catarauqui) means, "up this river, clay banks", important material for pots. Ga-na-na-kwe, (Gananoque) means, "up this river, flint", for knives and arrowheads. Gananoque is not usually regarded as part of the Kente Country. The Kente was from Brighton on the west to the top of Howe Island on the east. It included all the countryside around, for a day's journey north. By this reckoning, however, Gananoque might be included. But the red man was not logical; he was wise. Manatoanna, the Garden of the Gods, or of the Great Spirit (the Thousand Islands) is an Ojibway (Algonquin) name. The Mohawks controlled the Adirondacks, but their control was disputed by the powerful Ojibways who were always coming and going there. Now, inasmuch as the Mohawks were a peaceful people and the Kente Mohawks were a special branch who considered themselves as the guardians of the Kente, the peaceful and beautiful paradise, the sacred home of the Thunderbird with its holy of holies at Deseronto and along the bay to Ga-ne-yos, meaning "God's Water" (now called Big Bay), nothing was welcome anywhere near the Kente Country but peace. To avoid trouble, the Mohawks winked the eye at the presence of the Ojibways in the Garden of the Gods. But that the Mohawks kept an eye on the Gananoque River, because of the flint supply, is indicated in the preservation of the name.

How long this important eastern end of the Kente had been known as the Safe Passage (like the western end, the Kentio, to be mentioned later) we can only guess; possibly many thousand years. The importance of Catarauqui may not go so far back. In any case, and no matter what Frontenac's commercial or selfish motives may have been in building Fort Frontenac, his choice of Catarauqui, in 1673, as the place to meet the Iroquois for a bit of treaty making was recommended to him by the fact that Catarauqui had been the big place of meeting for red men for many a long day; and the "Safe Passage" had been the way to it from the south and western New York State. Most of the Iroquois nations were represented on the Kente in summer and research discloses much Seneca influence in the Kente Country. No matter with what blind arrogance Champlain and Frontenac looked upon the sacred Thunderbird, they did not permit religious fanaticism to cloud their diplomatic sagacity. The

Cataraqui was the place of big pow-wow under the wing of the holy Thunderbird, on the sacred waters! Any treaty made there would be kept. By the red man, that is!

Cataraqui was the river's name, but it was the overall name for the area. Thus we have "The Greater Cataraqui", the open water in front of Kingston, down to Howe Island; the Cataraqui River; and the Little Cataraqui, which pioneer maps and others since place at western edge of Portsmouth. But I wash my hands of this: Collins Bay seems to me more like its real location, if, indeed, it was Indian and not a mere pioneer innovation. Collins Bay and Creek were not unimportant; where are their Indian names?

The Thunderbird, Rah-way-rosta, had its home, Yoh-yah-dah-doh-kanthe, near Deseronto (Day-say-ronth-yoh, meaning "thunder and lightning"). Yoh-yah-dah-doh-kanthe means "the sacred retreat, or home, or preserve, of the Thunderbird", and this area extended from Napanee River to the Salmon River, the latter a straight translation of O-yah-gah-ron-a, and the river was filled with salmon. We improved things. We polluted the river, made it a creek, wiped out the Indian name, and wiped out the salmon!

That the Ojibways and other Algonquin peoples came down into the Kente often enough, is indicated in the fact that the Algonquin name, Napanee, if it is Algonquin, has prevailed. The Salmon River had another name, the Gossipi, in pioneer days, a record of the presence of the Missisauga, Ojibway people, on the Kente when the U.E. Loyalists arrived. Gossipi is probably a corruption of gos, for getting out in a hurry, and sibi, for river, meaning, "emergency exit!" Napanee's meaning is obscure, but, like Gossipi, it seems to indicate a menting like, "up this way". "in this direction lies (something)", referring, of course, to strong Algonquin country. When the Iroquois advance scouts were spotted, the Ojibways skedaddled to the north. Missisauga Point gets its name from the Missisaugas, who were not strong on the Kente, but powerful in the Kawartha Lakes country. Their name seems to be a compound word of "large" and "river mouth", probably a people who hung around some northern river with a large mouth. We have Sagiwan (pronounced saug-e-wan) Island, in the Belleville vicinity, which means, "here is the river mouth"; as in all cases this name told a story, but what was up that river might be who knows what?

The Sagonaska River emptied into the Kente at the Mohawk village site called Kente. It was an exceedingly beautiful river, until the people of Belleville renamed it the Moira, a name of ominous portent, for, lo! they turned it into an ugly, stinking, open sewer with very little water in summer, the forests at its source having been destroyed. Sagonaska means, "choppy, or dancing water", and it is loaded with overtones. It means the waves of the river water rushing south into the bay and meeting

the cross waves, usually from the west, thus causing a very dangerous spot of water glittering and dancing in the sunlight. It is interesting to note that an extension of the name, Sagonaska, is sagonaskagon, which means, "I upset my canoe". Present day Mohawks have a more modern name for Belleville, Joh-nah-wah-dayh, as do the Ojibways, Asaukhknosk, the latter said to mean "place where the rushes end"; neither of these names yields to research—the Mohawk too modern, the Ojibway too doubtful and obscure, its ugliness out of harmony with ancient, streamline effect, hence questionable.

When I was a lad growing up in Belleville, I remember the Ojibways (at least they were Indians from up the Sagonaska) camping at the mouth of the river in spring and early summer, on the same old Indian village site. In those days, my grandparents and the elders spoke of the Bay of Quinte as "The Kanty". Nobody knew the origin of the name, nor does anyone seem to know how Kente got twisted into Bay of Quinte. Had the white man been aware of the true nature of things, shall we say, Belleville would be called Kente today, as would the bay. Ultimately, when Canada awakes culturally from its coma of colonialism, the region from Brighton to Abbey Dawn and the Greater Cataraqui will be known as *The Kente Country*.

The origin of the name, Kente, was never lost by the white man, for he never had known it. Had he known its origin, he surely would have tried to preserve it. As it was, save for a few elders in Tyendinaga, even the Mohawks had forgotten it! They had so well hidden their holy secrets in utter silence in their wounded hearts, that only my profound sympathy as a poet could persuade them to reveal their lofty and prideful past, the enlightenment and human harmony of which will remain, eternally, as a rebuke before which we can stand only with lowered eyes, in shame. Fortunately, Kajeje Yohsta, herself a poetess, vibrated to the chord of Gitchi Nagamo. She died in 1952, but her husband and mother, whose memories are typical, helped, as did others, when they became convinced of my sincerity and integrity. When the name of the retreat of the Thunderbird finally was sounded in Mohawk for me, I finally got it down on paper, phonetically, Yoh-yah-dah-doh-kanthe. The Fairies of Abbey Dawn, shall we say, had spent years fitting me for that moment. "Am I hearing and seeing what I imagine I hear and see?" I said, slowly and impressively, and looked up at my mentor. She smiled, delighted that I wasn't missing a trick. "Yes, *kanthe*, the whole region took its name from that, the Kente, sacred water." After the excitement, I said, "You know, Kajeje Yohsta, that I accept this; but when the door blows open, the man with the big feet is the white man! Do you mind if I do some research in Montreal?" She understood. So, I left, at once, for Montreal, and, there, in the Jesuit College on Bleury Street, I found, in the old records, references to the *Bay Kanthe*. Probably no white man ever before had known the origin of the name of the Bay of Quinte.

Mohawk lore has many sayings, most of them given sinister interpretation by the Christian fanatics. The Indian had, still has, an hilarious

sense of humor, often a subtle humour. When the door blows open of its own accord, the Mohawk comments, with a chuckle or a grunt (or what have you :) "The man with the big feet again!" And this reference means the devil. It has no more hint of meaning in it than has a spontaneous saying we might use if a stiff, zero wind, or hard rain, opened the door: "All hell's bursting in!", or, "The devil take that door!" The Indian pulled the white man's leg and the white man wrote it down, confusion worse confounded!

Big Bay's name is an example of Mohawk technique in amiable subtlety in keeping sacred things inviolate. This bay's true name is Ga-ne-yos, meaning God's Bay. It is at the western end of the holy retreat of the Thunderbird, the inner sanctum. The French named a band of Indians living there the Ganeouses. When they, the white men, asked what Gane-yos means, the Mohawks said, *Big Bay*. And BIG is exactly what the Mohawk meant; and he knew that it was a truth that would mis-blaze the trail to the truth.

The Thunderbird, Rah-way-rosta, like the life of Deganaweda, is beyond dealing with adequately in this address. All we can do is to touch upon it, get it centred, and stimulate the beginnings of public interest in it. I doubt if the people who heard me recite my song for the ship, *Frontenac*, at the war-time christening, grasped its significance. I doubt if the men aboard who sang it did, although they must have sensed the fire in it. Not that the thunderbird squadrons of the Air Force figured in it, for they didn't. Their source was the Western thunderbird symbol. I speak of the Eastern North American Thunderbird (basically the same idea, of course) the home of which was where the Tyendinaga Reserve now is. Between Ottawa and Belleville, in 1926, the late Ernest Thompson Seton opined to me, that someone, some fine day, would discover a hot trail to the truth about the Thunderbird, and its eastern home would be somewhere in Canada.

How the Thunderbird was found and all that does not concern us; what does is, that it had two forms, one the material manifestation, the other the spiritual, the White Eagle, White Wampum. When some red men in Quebec, probably Hurons, noticed the white dove of the holy spirit above the altar in the church, they asked the priest if that was meant for the Thunderbird: the priests said "no!" which was a lost cause now beyond knowing, of course. The correct answer, a qualified "Yes!" might have changed history, but mightily. The Thunderbird was the symbol of God, the Great Spirit. Thunder and lightning was its manifestation. The Kente is shaped like lightning. Opposite Deseronto, on the high shore, or above it, back of it, thunder and lightning are said, by early historians, to play nightly. Whether nightly or not I do not know, but amazingly often I do know, and the phenomenon can be witnessed from Glenora, in full, but faintly. For nobody knows how long, for how many generations, a white eagle nested at Eagle Hill, just west of Deseronto.

Whether a white strain, we do not know; but strong in Kente (and other) traditions from the dim past is the White Eagle.

At Glenora was the Lake of the Gods, *O-no-ke-no-ga*. It was associated with the "Three Sisters", the "Good Providers" the "Intercessors", so-called by all these names. They were Corn, Beans and Squash. As vegetables, they were the Good Providers; as "The Intercessors", they had somewhat the place of saints. They were no more evil, no more nonsensical, every bit as good and sacred as our saints. Lake-on-the-Mountain is a silly name, just a record of a bunch of barbarians ravishing and destroying a land of heavenly beauty and romantic heritage.

At Glenora, too, is the spirit of *As-ko-not-ka*, the young lover, probably an Algonquin, "who lured away a Kente maiden, and when overtaken by the girl's irate father, both leapt to their death from the cliff, at the site of the cave at Glenora." (from a letter to W.H.R. by Don S. Lighthall, M.D., July 15th, 1945). There are slight variations in the tale; the right one seems to be preserved in the spirit's name: *Asko-notka* means many things, with rich, romantic over tones: "Roof Leaking", which hints at the water pouring down from an elevation; it also means "Bursting Through from Inside", which is exactly what the water does; it bursts through the cliff wall, at one place, a tunnel probably developed from a small leak. According to Kajeje Yohsta, the maiden cast herself over the cliff at the waterfall, to her death, and her lover drowned himself in *O-no-ke-no-ga*, where his spirit was impounded, forbidden to go over the falls. But his appeal to the "Three Sisters" (The Intercessors) was not in vain. The gods created a tiny leak under the falls, and *Asko-notka* burst through to the waiting spirit of his sweetheart. Also, according to Kajeje Yohsta, *Asko-notka*, in the custom of Indian names, takes unto itself every last drop of the essence of poetry and imaginative beauty that the word will yield in association with the whole conception. Thus, in this legend and its name, we have red man mystics concerning the unknown source of water: "water bursting through". *Asko-notka!* "The spirit that rends the wall".

I would be remiss, unworthy, indeed, in this dawn of indigenous culture in Ontario, were I to fail to draw your attention again to the poetry, the Chinese brevity, and the singing beauty of Redman names. The "Three Sisters", or "Intercessors", were called *Deh-yon-hek-wen*. The whole legend, the mystery of the lake, the Altar of God (where prayers were offered in springtime for a good harvest), the waterfall for a landmark (it could be heard a long way off), all are contained in but seven words:

O-no-ke-no-ga,
Deh-yon-hek-wen,
As-ko-not-ka!
Deh-yon-hek-wen,
Deh-yon-hek-wen,
O-no-ke-no-ga,
As-ko-not-ka!

It is with little short of anguish that I am obliged to carry on with our title. Fain would I deal with all the lovely, informative poetry in this Kente geography, but we must get on with it. And, just for that, I will hand out some unpleasantry, in large doses. Canadian and American history is an abominable concoction. I was taught, in school, that Deseronto got its name from Captain John, who had quite an unpleasant time of it with Joseph Brant (a big explosion, in fact) and that Brant went off to found Brantford but Captain John headed the opposition and he and his band founded Deseronto; also that the Mohawks came to the Bay of Quinte for the first time with the U.E. Loyalists and were helped by the British in finding a suitable place. My book, *Thunderbird*, is the answer to that. The truth will out: the Mohawks of the Kente were but returning to their ancient homeland. When Captain John became the leader of this Kente Mohawk people down in the Mohawk Valley, he chose Deseronto (Day-say-ronth-yoo), "Thunder and Lightning") for his name, hoping, we may suppose, to lead his people back to the paradise of the Thunderbird. Joseph Brant and Captain John knew their history: the Kente people remained on the Kente, and other Iroquois nations went to the Brantford area.

When the white man dug the Murray Canal he was just floating his canoe through a ditch. The Indian found it easier to pick up his canoe, and, of a truth, this is the origin of the name "Carrying Place". *De-ga-hun-wa-kwa*, "I pick up my canoe", was the name of the short trail connecting Kente waters at that point. The bay at Brighton was all one with Kente, and the village of Kente was there at times, as it was at Wapoose, Hay Bay, and elsewhere. Wapoose means rabbit, it may be the origin of papoose, as rabbit fur was much used with babies.

Now, then, while the Ojibways lent their language to less vital rivers running north, it is significant that Mohawk names are at Cataraqui and Kentio (Trent River) and both loaded with meaning: the *io* on Kentio is like the *io* in Ohio: it means, briefly, beauty or importance, or both. In Kentio, it indicated that "here is the important place": which meant, of course, that it was from this point in the Kente that one made exit to the country of the Hurons and beyond. Another interesting name is Mashkode (variously spelled, even corrupted into *mosquito!*), the name applied to the area of Big Bay where the trail might be found up a gully or a small creek to the plateau, or flat lands. A marsh was there, a small marsh, as compared with that of today. Anyway, the name means, "a large prairie", and it has overtones of meaning associating the flatlands and the reedlands.

— IV —

In drawing this address to a close, Mr. Chairman, we may return to the Thunderbird as the symbol of the red man's way of life, just as the Christian Cross is said to be our symbol. I am no emotional poet only, but also a meticulous historian not anxious to be found wanting in that respect by posterity: and I say to you, after long, long years of research, delving for facts, and after years of seeing through them and under them and around them, as a poet, that the white man builds beautiful churches; and neglects them! The Mohawk built beautiful concepts; and lived them! They never have forgotten Deganaweda; and, recently, having themselves gathered enough money (Indian money, no white help) to erect the first material memorial to him, which they had planned to erect at Niagara Falls, New York, their Pine Tree Chief addressed them at Abbey Dawn, with the strong support of Kajeje Yohsta before the Council Fire, with a plea to have the Memorial at Deganaweda's birthplace on the Kente. It took a year for this to be considered and acted upon by all the Six Nations. The final answer was given at the Council Fire at Abbey Dawn, spring, 1952. Kajeje Yohsta had died, but, you will be happy to know, she knew what the answer would be three days before she died. The Memorial is at Tyendinaga.

It is interesting to note this revival of the custom of the red men to pow-wow at Cataraqi. Three far-reaching Council Fires have taken place in this Cataraqi area in recent years, being held at Abbey Dawn. And when I say we succeeded in persuading the Six Nations to place the Memorial at Tyendinaga on the Kente shore, I am not speaking as a white man, but as a red man, a Mohawk by adoption, and it was as such that my voice was heard and carried afar. One could dally and muse on this point, for, after all, I am a white man. It is enough, maybe, to say that my voice, with a Mother of the Tribes backing me, did prevail.

The picture I have just given of the functioning of the "Longhouse", the Iroquois parliament, in an actual matter of grave and emotional concern to all Six Nations, a deeply sacred and religious matter, has been given you in order to bring home to you the calm, unhurried and patient way in which the real Longhouse worked. Desired action by parliament was considered by each nation for a whole year. Then a Council Fire (akin to a provincial house) was held by each nation in its own country. Big chiefs carried the decision or attitude to the Longhouse kept by the Onondagas, the Central Council Fire. There the final decision was made. Sometimes it took several years of patient discussions. Thus, when a final decision was arrived at, it was, beyond doubt, the will of the people, the inevitable. And this is what happened in the case of the final and at long, long last judgment passed upon the Jesuits. It was only after years of patient warning and many Council Fires obeying all the rules of dignity and humanity, the Great Council Fire at Onondaga condemned the Jesuits to execution, and the Hurons to be destroyed as a nation (broken up and scattered by adoption, chiefly). Oh! what a woeful echo was this to the shot that Champlain fired there in 1615! We have no time to go into the case, save to say that the Iroquois had more than a

case; they had a *cause!* And yet, they were loth to act. When they did, they did. That the rank and file vented all the pent up fury of many years of suppressed bitterness is hardly to be wondered at. The wonder is, that they did carry out the sentence as intended, in a general way; and many Hurons escaped and many were adopted. The Huron Nation was scattered.

Speaking of laws: we white men have the Church, the State, the School, the Prison. All red men were not alike, as peoples: but the Kente Mohawks, and the Mohawks in general, were the peak of Indian civilization as known in northeastern North America at the time. They had a way of life that combined law and custom and tradition and education in relationship to the Council Fire in a way that we would call an attitude to life, a totalness that had religion in it, strongly, but which was not just a religion. And yet, there was a *oneness* of life the light of which is in the teachings of Jesus, a oneness we do not seem to grasp.

We have something they had not, though: prisons!

There were two things the red man considered the very foundation of life: truth and dignity. And, by the same token in reverse, he feared and hated lies, punished or destroyed, ruined or exiled, the confirmed social failures, with contempt and ridicule, what the Chinese call "loss of face". The more one becomes acquainted with the real red man, the Indian before the white man "improved him", the more one surrenders to pensive silence and remorse: certainly no poet born to the purple can remain arrogant in the presence of the ethnological and linguistic enigma of the red man in America.

Because of the limitations of space and time, I must refer you to my literary works for further enlightenment on the legends of the Milky Way and the Silver Stag. A beautiful doe traversed the length of the Milky Way in the course of a year. The Silver Stag with the Golden Horns glittering on an Adirondack peak at that magic moment when the first eye of Sol peeks over the rim of morning! There is no mythology in ancient Greece, to outshine the Kente lore, nothing fabulous has come out of Far Cathay more transcendent, nor can Odin and the Valkyries and all of Europe yield anything to surpass the originality, the versatility, and the imaginative flight of red man mythology. Oh, what we have lost! Oh, that we could have known! O Pindar! O Shade of Sappho! I am ashamed!

Doubtless, Mr. Chairman, if, in the future, some deeply inspired historian really digs into records and languages, this little harvest of my musings around the Kente will seem pathetic. I know that. But I should like this Kingston Historical Society, and especially its sincerely aware and devoted officers, to know and share with me my long-time dream, that, one fine day, someone with money who really wants to purchase Paradise, will set up and endow a Chair of Kente Lore in Queen's University. The prophesy of Deganaweda has come to pass; what we stole possesses us. We cannot live without it! What we are slowly responding to, the culture of the Thunderbird, will teach us, through its "white wampum purity", the trail back to the humanity and philosophy of the Oneness of Man.

